



TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Town of East Hampton Implements Two Key Measures to Ensure Safe Operations at the East Hampton Airport

Aircraft Pilot Faces 90-Day Suspension from East Hampton Airport

Effective April 28, 2021, local pilot David Wisner, has been prohibited by Airport Manager Jim Brundige from operating any aircraft at East Hampton Airport for a period of 90 days. Mr. Wisner's suspension resulted from the careless and reckless operation of his single-engine Cessna during an April 13 flight that alarmed the community. According to data from the East Hampton Airport's flight tracking system, Mr. Wisner dangerously overflew populated areas at altitudes as low as 25 feet.

In addition to the 90-day suspension, Mr. Wisner recently turned himself in to Sag Harbor Village Police to face a criminal charge for reckless endangerment. The FAA is also investigating whether Mr. Wisner's pilot's license should be suspended or revoked. The Town of East Hampton is assisting Sag Harbor Village Police and the FAA with their investigations.

Ban on "Special VFR" Practice

As the summer season approaches, the East Hampton Airport Air Traffic Control Tower will no longer allow helicopter and seaplane pilots to request special handling in marginal weather conditions with poor visibility. The practice, known as Special VFR, allows unqualified aircraft and pilots to fly in bad weather if a special permission is requested before arriving or departing the East Hampton Airport.

The East Hampton Town Board and the Airport Manager have been opposed to the practice as it increasingly became standard operating procedure when the weather is overcast on the East End, resulting in flights at very low altitudes. Mr. Brundige's notice to the FAA of the Town's Special VFR ban raised several safety concerns with the procedure and concluded "after careful consideration of these and other safety factors, our contract Air Traffic Control Tower has been advised to deny any requests for Special VFR clearances."

According to East Hampton Town Councilman Jeff Bragman, the airport liaison, these recent actions “demonstrate the Town Board’s commitment to taking swift action against anyone who uses the East Hampton Airport in an unsafe manner.”

“The safety of the residents of East Hampton Town and other communities under the flight paths cannot be compromised by East Hampton Airport users,” said East Hampton Town Supervisor Peter Van Scoyoc. “While the Town continues to seek ways to mitigate the airport’s noise impacts, within difficult Federal Aviation Administration constraints, there is no question that we must act decisively to address any and all aviation safety issues.”